

TX GOVERNOR PERRY.
ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE 77TH
LEGISLATURE

RECEIVED

MAY 31-2001

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE 77TH LEGISLATURE

SEN. MIKE MONCRIEF'S
OFFICE

Excerpts from the State of the State Address - January 27, 2001



Legislation & Appropriations

"I strongly believe we must invest in our future by tripling the TEXAS Grant Program to \$300 million. In doing so, we will open the doors of higher education to another 65,000 students."

"We should also create a TEXAS Grant II program for students who enroll at our two-year colleges."

"I support efforts to create a technology scholarship that will increase the number of computer science and engineering degrees awarded by our Texas universities."

"I have proposed boosting funding for research and faculty recruitment."

"We must build a seamless system of K through 16 education, starting early in the pre-kindergarten years all the way through college."

\$200 million additional funding above 2000-01 levels bringing total funding to \$295.3 million for an estimated 65,000 students

SB 1596

\$10 million in budget

SB 353

\$10.2 million in budget for a range of strategies to increase the number of engineering and computer science graduates

\$27 million in research funds to 4 state health science centers, plus as much as \$20 million to develop Houston Biotech Park

SB 573 provides for a public awareness campaign on the importance of a college education
\$5 million in budget

HB 6 allows universities to create charter schools

"My budget continues our investment in early childhood literacy, with an increase of more than \$100 million for the Student Success Initiative."

"That's why I have proposed a new math initiative that will help prepare our fifth through eighth grade students.... We should duplicate the approach taken in developing the Master Reading Teacher Program by establishing a Master Math Teacher Program that rewards expert instructors with a \$5,000 annual bonus."

"I also believe we should increase the allotment for technology in schools \$35 per student so more students can learn their lessons using the tools of tomorrow."

"That's why I would like to more than triple funding for the new Teach for Texas Grant Program -- the new college grant program that helps pay for tuition, fees and books of students who commit to teaching in a high-need subject area upon graduation."

"We should expand alternative certification to allow qualified technology professionals and other private sector individuals to draw on their wealth of knowledge and expertise to teach our children ..."

"Last session, we made a needed investment in our public schools with an across-the-board \$3,000 pay raise for every teacher, counselor, nurse and librarian. I would like to see that trend continued by freeing up close to \$700 million in capital gains from the Permanent School Fund to be used for teacher compensation or benefits"

SB 373 increases budget for the Student Success Initiative which ensures all students perform at grade-level

HB 1624
\$30 million in budget for intensive math instruction and Master Math Teachers

HB 1475 moves Texas toward the goal of improving technology training by creating Master Technology Teacher Program

SB 975 creates a pilot program for electronic course education

SB 1057
\$16 million in budget for Teach for Texas Grants; an increase of \$12 million above 2000-01 funding

HB 1721 eases certification of teachers from other states

SB 998 eases certification process for those who teach in alternative education programs 3 years or longer

HB 3343
\$1.2 billion in budget for school employee health insurance without impacting the Permanent School Fund; funding from available revenue

"We should also work toward the goal of raising the multiplier used to calculate retired teachers' pensions."

"I also believe now is the time to strengthen and improve our state's charter school system, and not turn our backs on the parents and children and educators who benefit from the flexibility and innovation of charter schools."

"I would like for both chambers to pass a bonding program to jump-start (highway) construction across our state."

"We should also build more toll roads.... streamline the design and engineering process, ...and consider pavement warranties so we spend less time and money fixing bad roads in the years ahead."

"I have also included in my budget a \$30 million border transportation initiative."

"We must work to immunize more children, especially along the border and in our urban areas, against whooping cough, measles, mumps and chickenpox."

SB 273 raises the retired teachers' pension multiplier to 2.3.

HB 6 strengthens the Texas charter school program, expands the number of charter schools in Texas and allows universities to establish charter schools.

\$2 million in funding for a virtual charter school pilot program.

SB 4 and SJR 16, upon voter approval, create the Texas Mobility Fund.

SB 342 allows state funds to be used to help build toll roads and allows pilot projects using "design build."

SB 1296 and SJR 37, upon voter approval, create the border road bond program. Funds could be used to leverage \$175 million in projects.

\$72.8 million appropriation for the Texas Immunization Strategy.

SB 43 -- Medicaid simplification eliminates the face-to-face renewal requirement. If parents take their children to get their primary and preventive care check-ups, including immunizations.

"We must try new technology, like telemedicine, to help combat conditions like tuberculosis, diabetes, heart disease and cancer, while looking for better long-term health care solutions."

"Speaking of healthier children, we must do everything in our power to enroll more children of working families in CHIP."

"We must safeguard the lives of our most vulnerable citizens -- our oldest and youngest Texans -- by increasing funding for nursing homes and child protective services."

"We can increase access to child care for Texans transitioning off welfare while continuing to place a strong emphasis on employment and personal responsibility."

"We must continue to welcome and encourage the generous contributions of private charitable and faith-based groups."

"That means better water management and conservation..."

HB 2700 creates a telemedicine pilot project to bring medical care to under-served regions.

\$1.4 billion in budget for Children's Health Insurance Plan and related programs, an all-funds increase of \$935.7 million that will enroll 492,799 children by the end of 2003.

\$190.3 million in state funds dedicated to leverage additional federal funds for a total of \$478.3 million in new or increased nursing home funding.

\$24.8 million in new funds for program expansion, bringing the Child Protective Services budget to \$528 million.

\$58 million increase for child care, for a total of \$880.1 million.

HB 560 extends charitable immunity to religious charitable organizations.

SB 84 extends immunity to some volunteer centers.

HB 1689 simplifies the process for charitable organizations to get tax-exempt status.

SB2 provides protection and planning for Texas' water supply as well as assisting groundwater districts as they manage and conserve aquifers.

... supporting our state's system of parks."

"We must remain committed to significantly reducing pollution, realizing that decisions affecting Texas' air quality should be made by Texans, and not federal bureaucrats."

"In the interest of greater justice, I believe we should welcome the use of DNA technology in cases where it can prove claims of innocence, or provide further assurance of guilt."

"I also support creating a statewide standard for defense counsel in capital murder cases, with appropriate standards regarding criminal defense experience, continuing education, and proper conduct of every defense attorney."

"I agree with Speaker Laney that we should not shy away from making the reforms needed to ensure trust in our system of elections."

HB 3064 and HJR 97, upon voter approval, will allow \$36.7 million in general obligation bonds to build, repair and improve parks.

SB 305 promotes long-range planning in the state parks system.

SB 5 provides several incentive-based programs that will lead to cleaner air.

HB 2912 eliminates the grandfathered facilities provision.

SB 3 provides for post-conviction DNA testing for felons in cases where there is a question of guilt.

SB 7 creates a statewide program \$19.8 million in budget for the establishment of an indigent defense task force, and an additional \$1.7 million for expanded training to criminal defense attorneys who represent indigent defendants.

SB 79 aims to reduce voter fatigue by reducing the number of uniform election date exceptions.

HB 1856 phases out punch-card voting systems.

House did not concur in Senate amendments to campaign finance reform bill.

“There is another matter before us...redistricting.”

“Texans want us to pass a balanced budget.”

“We should look for ways to also address the pay needs of our hard-working prison guards and other state employees.”

“Because of concerns that our economy is slowing, it is important that we ensure the Rainy Day Fund contains the \$1 billion it is projected to have by 2003.”

No deal was reached on legislative redistricting; congressional and State Board of Education districts are still being considered.

SB-1 funds a variety of programs through a balanced budget.

Approximately \$700 million in budget for a 4 percent across-the-board raise and targeted raises for state prison guards, among others.

The Legislature did not dip into the Rainy Day Fund.

Governor Rick Perry 05/29/01
(note: the governor often deviates from text)

"Thank you all for being here today.

One hundred and forty days ago, few people had high hopes for the 77th Legislature.

The delayed presidential election results meant very quick transitions for Lt. Governor Ratliff and me.

The national press corps was predicting budget doom and gloom, deficits and tax hikes, because of the record tax cuts we passed in 1999. And just about everyone predicted that redistricting would be a black hole, sucking the oxygen out of the session and derailing any meaningful accomplishments.

As is often the case, the conventional wisdom was wrong.

By virtually any measure, the 77th Legislative Session was a success. It may not have been the most graceful session, but ultimately the people of Texas will judge us on results...and on that basis, this session was a significant success.

We achieved reforms, and provided funding, for priorities like higher education, public education, health and human services, and the border...results I would suggest to you are deserving of an "A" on any report card. And I'm proud of legislators of both parties for working together to make a difference for this state.

This was the first session since 1991 that Texas had a slowing economy, and the first session since 1991 that we addressed the contentious issue of redistricting.

Yet we passed a balanced state budget, meeting our basic needs and funding priority programs, without repealing the 1999 tax cuts and without passing new sales, income, gasoline, or nursing home taxes. The budget did a much more efficient job of drawing down federal revenues.

When you consider state general revenue and dedicated general revenue - without the tobacco settlement - the budget grew at an annual rate of about 4 percent - lower than 1997 or 1999 - and in-line with projected growth in the economy.

We made the dream of a college education a reality for 65,000 more Texas students, by tripling funding for the TEXAS Grant Program to nearly \$300 million. This scholarship program says to Texans, "we don't want your future to be limited because your finances are limited."

Once again, we worked together to continue progress in our public schools by passing a \$30 million Math Initiative that will prepare young Texans for the jobs of the future. I believe this measure will also help at-risk students by helping to identify and correct their learning challenges before it's too late.

By passing a landmark teacher health insurance program, we will help keep qualified individuals in the classroom, and by strengthening charter schools we keep this important option open to parents and students and protect against the few bad actors in the charter movement.

On the important issue of traffic congestion, we saw a significant cultural change. If voters approve, we will start to move away from the pay-as-you-go model to a system of bonding. We also expanded toll road opportunities, and adopted a more regional approach to address our transportation challenges. And

through state and federal appropriations, we have an additional \$1 billion to spend on our state's transportation needs.

A number of the objectives I outlined in my State of the State address regarding progress on the border were accomplished through a strong bipartisan coalition. That progress includes a telemedicine bill that focuses on under-served areas, new bonding tools to make up to \$175 million available for roads in the colonias, and a Medicaid simplification plan which will have an important impact on the border region.

When you add up these important programs and border higher education funding, the border region could see as much as a \$360 million dollar increase over the next two years. That's a success by virtually any measure.

Medicaid simplification will result in more care given in the doctor's office instead of the emergency room, while maintaining strong incentives for personal responsibility. We also addressed critical needs of our most vulnerable population – seniors in nursing homes – by increasing state and federal funding by \$478 million without increasing their tax burden.

We also took a hard look at our criminal justice system, focusing attention both on tough new laws, and important reforms aimed at insuring fairness. With our new DNA law, prosecutors will have greater tools to convict criminals, and the wrongly convicted will have access to the evidence they need to reverse their conviction.

And this was also the most environmentally friendly session in recent memory, to the benefit of Texas air, water and families.

Some will cite occasional flare-ups and honest disputes as symptomatic of this session. But those instances were not unique to this session. In fact, when you consider the combusive elements present when we entered this session – a slowing economy, redistricting, and new leadership – we did very well in producing solid results for the people of Texas.

This legislature made great strides on behalf of future generations. Republicans and Democrats are to be complimented for rising above differences to seek common ground for the common good in important areas such as health care, infrastructure, and education.

With that, I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

#####